



THE SCHEMEL FORUM

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

THE SCHEMEL FORUM

FOR CULTURAL ENRICHMENT & EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

A PROGRAM OF THE HARRY & JEANETTE
WEINBERG MEMORIAL LIBRARY

SPRING 2026





George J. Aulizio, Ph.D.

WELCOME FROM THE **director**

Welcome to a new semester of the Schemel Forum. This semester’s offerings span a wide range of ideas and disciplines—from food systems and climate justice to art history, artificial intelligence, ancient wisdom traditions, insights on the federal government, and the American Revolution. That breadth reflects what the Schemel Forum does best—create space for serious inquiry that connects past and present, scholarship and public life.

I’m grateful to Munley Law for its continued partnership as our comprehensive sponsor. And now that the Schemel Forum Advisory Board is underway, we’ll be welcoming additional members this spring to help us plan Fall 2026 programming and keep the Schemel Forum responsive to what this community values most. Angel and Archangel members are invited to participate, and I hope you’ll consider joining us.

This spring also includes two special collaborative programs. Dr. Richard Kogan will return for another performance and lecture—hosted at the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine—exploring the life and music of George Gershwin and the themes of music and healing. We’re also excited to unveil a newly restored 16th-century Italian Renaissance painting in the Weinberg Memorial Library, featuring remarks by the conservator and an art historian, followed by a reception in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room.

Thank you for your continued support. Invite a friend, bring a guest, and help us keep building a community grounded in thoughtful conversation and shared curiosity.

With gratitude,

George J. Aulizio

George Aulizio, Ph.D.

Dean of the Weinberg Memorial Library & Director of the Schemel Forum

courses



Food, Climate Change, and Justice

This course will address the multifaceted connections and concerns of justice that exist between food and agricultural systems and global climate change. We’ll consider both the scientific data as well as the philosophical literature as we work towards an understanding of how justice demands we think about food systems and individual food choices in the context of a warming world.

Sarah Kenehan, Ph.D., *Executive Director of the Gail and Francis Slattery Center for the Ignatian Humanities, The University of Scranton*

Mondays, February 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2, & 9

6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. • Weinberg Memorial Library, Room 305



Appreciating Art Through the Ages

First published in 1926, Helen Gardner’s *Art Through the Ages*, with its subsequent revised editions, has served as a standard art history text for 100 years. This course considers major stylistic developments and significant artworks from the Ancient, Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Modern, and Contemporary eras described in Gardner’s volume over the past century.

Darlene Miller-Lanning, Ph.D., *Director of the Hope Horn Art Gallery, The University of Scranton*

Wednesdays, March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29

6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. • Weinberg Memorial Library, Room 305

about THE SCHEMEL FORUM

The Schemel Forum was founded in July 2006 through generous gifts to the Rev. George Schemel, S.J., Fund, created by friends of the late Father Schemel in his loving memory. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to explore the intellectual and cultural wonders of the world.

COURSE FEES:

Free for University of Scranton and Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine students, staff, and faculty. Courses are included for Schemel Forum Members, Angels, and Archangels.
Non-Member Single Fee: \$100 • Non-Member Couple Fee: \$175



Friday, February 27

Advancing Decision Sciences with Artificial Intelligence: Swarm Intelligence, Predictive Analytics, and Executive AI Leadership

Professor Anasse Bari has led transformative research in artificial intelligence and predictive analytics—work that has saved lives through early disease prediction, reshaped Wall Street with AI-driven investment tools, accelerated the discovery of new energy sources, and strengthened civic engagement, election forecasting, and political strategy. This talk will explain how swarm intelligence—AI inspired by the collective behavior of bird flocks, dolphin pods, and ant colonies—is driving new algorithms that generate forward-looking insights in complex environments. It will feature case studies led and deployed by Professor Bari, including predictive modeling for COVID-19 severity, real-time election forecasting and public opinion modeling, swarm-based trading, and AI tools accelerating research and commercialization in emerging energy sources such as Low Energy Nuclear Reactions (LENR), and will introduce the BARI AI Enterprise Transformation Framework for Executives.

Anasse Bari, Ph.D., *Professor of Computer Science, Courant Institute School for Mathematics, Computing, and Data Science, New York University; Director, NYU's Predictive Analytics and AI Research Lab; Contributor, CNN and the Washington Post.*

Brennan Hall, Rose Room, 509 • 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.



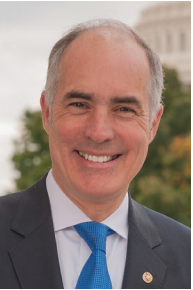
Friday, March 6

Commemorating and Interpreting the American Revolution 250 Years Later

The years 2025–2033 mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolutionary War, with particular emphasis on 2026, the year the United States formally declared independence. While major milestones often dominate public commemoration, the defeats, glories, stories, and often-overlooked faceless individuals of the Revolution merit equal attention. James McKane examines the American Revolution through living history, drawing upon his extensive experiences organizing, leading, and participating in historical reenactments. These experiences include rowing across the Delaware River on Christmas Day, recreating hundreds of period-accurate uniforms, and even constructing eighteenth-century fortifications for Ken Burns’s recent documentary on the war. By deepening his understanding of the period’s challenges, he is able to interpret them effectively for audiences to better their appreciation of the history.

James McKane, *Living history interpreter and artisan; advisor for Ken Burns’ The American Revolution; leader of multiple living history organizations; Design Patent Examiner, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; B.A. in History, University of Scranton, Class of 2020.*

Brennan Hall, Rose Room, 509 • 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Thursday, March 26

The Federal Government Today: Institutional Pressures and the Way Forward

At a time of heightened public concern about governance, trust, and democratic stability, Senator Bob Casey offers a thoughtful examination of how the federal government operates today. Drawing on 18 years in the U.S. Senate representing Pennsylvania, this talk explores the role of federal institutions, the norms and constraints that guide them, and the pressures they face in an era of polarization, rapid change, and public skepticism. Senator Casey focuses on how governing systems work in practice—where they remain resilient, where they are under strain, and how accountability and constitutional guardrails function across branches of government. The talk concludes by considering a constructive path forward, including the roles of civic engagement, institutional responsibility, and informed public participation in sustaining democratic life.

The Honorable Bob Casey, Jr., *Leahy Distinguished Fellow in Public Service, The University of Scranton; former United States Senator from Pennsylvania (2007-2025); Treasurer of Pennsylvania (2005-2007); Auditor General of Pennsylvania (1997-2005).*

McIlhenny Ballroom, DeNaples Center, 407 • 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Tuesday, May 5

Wise Words: Ancient Egypt’s Wisdom Tradition

The literary genre known as “instructions” or “wisdom literature” is among the earliest in ancient Egyptian writing. Emerging in the Old Kingdom, these texts continued to be composed for more than two millennia, extending into the Ptolemaic and Roman eras. Although their structure and tone evolved over time, their fundamental purpose remained consistent. Typically framed as a father addressing to his son, instruction texts conveyed moral, ethical, and practical guidance for achieving a successful life, presenting the complied wisdom of the society that produced them. This tradition reflects the broader Egyptian interest in divine wisdom, embodied in deities such as Thoth and Maat, who oversaw knowledge, writing, and the proper order of the world. This talk will examine the central themes and motifs found in Egyptian wisdom literature and consider how they resonate with didactic traditions from neighboring ancient cultures.

Jennifer Houser Wegner, Ph.D., *Curator, Egyptian Section, Penn Museum, and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of Pennsylvania.*

Brennan Hall, Rose Room, 509 • 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

SEMINAR FEES:

Free for University of Scranton and Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine students, staff, and faculty. All seminars are included for Schemel Forum Members, Angels, and Archangels.
\$30 per luncheon per person • \$15 remote only



Thursday, April 9 • *With the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine*

George Gershwin: Music and Healing

A child of immigrants in New York City, George Gershwin was a hyperactive, behaviorally challenged youngster whose life was transformed when he heard a classmate’s violin recital through an open window. He was a creative phenomenon, a man who was able to extract music out of what others considered to be merely noise, a man who was inspired to write *An American in Paris* after hearing the sounds of Parisian taxi horns. Dr. Kogan reveals Gershwin’s thought processes during his artistic journey from *Rhapsody in Blue* to *Porgy and Bess* until his death at age 38 from a brain tumor and illuminates the presentation with performances of some of Gershwin’s most beloved music.

Richard Kogan, M.D., *Professor of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College, and Artistic Director, Weill Cornell Music and Medicine Program*

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Auditorium, 133 • 6:00 p.m

Performance, Lecture, and Reception — \$40 a la carte. Free for the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine and University of Scranton students, staff, and faculty. No additional charge for Schemel Forum Members, Angels, and Archangels.



Monday, April 30 • *With the Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library & Hope Horn Art Gallery*

Unveiling Niccolò Betti’s Madonna and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist

When the Morgan family gifted a remarkable Madonna and Child painting to The University of Scranton, its black, featureless background suggested a work of quiet simplicity. During restoration, however, conservators made an astonishing discovery — the black backdrop had been added long after the painting’s creation, concealing a rich, dark woodland setting and the figure of an infant St. John the Baptist. With the original composition revealed, the work was attributed to the 16th-century Italian Renaissance painter Niccolò Betti, best known for “The Sack of Corinth” in the Studiolo of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.

Join us for the public unveiling of this newly restored treasure before it takes its permanent place on the fourth floor of the Weinberg Memorial Library. The event will feature insights from the art restorer and art historian, followed by a reception in the Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room.

John Powell, *Art Restorer, Co-Owner, Chelsea Restoration Associates*

Robert Simon, Ph.D., *President, Robert Simon Fine Art*

Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room, Weinberg Memorial Library • 5:30 p.m.

Lecture, Exhibit, and Light Refreshments — **Complimentary and open to the community.**
Courtesy of the Friends of the Weinberg Memorial Library and Hope Horn Art Gallery.



Friday, May 29

Vin et Vues: Loire Valley and its Wines

Join us for a unique wine education event, featuring a four-course wine tasting, a presentation on wines of Loire Valley, France, and an interactive discussion. In addition to sampling four Loire Valley wines, there will be hors d’oeuvres and camaraderie for only \$60.

Explore France’s under-appreciated wine region, Loire Valley. The region looms large in French consciousness for history, the arts, and agriculture, yet is less recognized for wine, despite pioneering a number of varieties and styles. We’ll delve into this influential region carved by Europe’s longest wild river and sample a range of wine styles

David Falchek, CAE, IOM, CMP, *Wine Writer and Critic, including for Wine & Spirits Magazine and The Scranton Times-Tribune, and Former Executive Director of the American Wine Society*

Charles Kratz Scranton Heritage Room, Weinberg Memorial Library • 5:30 p.m

Wine Tasting, Hors d’Oeuvres, Lecture, and Discussion — \$60 à la carte; \$110 per couple. Schemel Forum Members, Angels, and Archangels are not charged an additional fee. Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine and University of Scranton students, staff, and faculty must purchase a ticket. *Must be 21 years or older.*

*Please CIRCLE number of people attending example 1 | 2

EVENING COURSES • Single Fee Non-Member: **\$100** • Couple Fee Non-Member: **\$175**

1 | 2 Food, Climate Change, and Justice • *Kenehan*

1 | 2 Appreciating Art Through the Ages • *Miller-Lanning*

WORLD AFFAIRS LUNCHEON SEMINARS • \$30 per luncheon • \$15 remote only

1 | 2 2/27/26: Advancing Decision Sciences with AI • *Bari*

1 | 2 3/06/26: Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution • *McKane*

1 | 2 3/26/26: The Federal Government Today • *Casey*

1 | 2 5/5/26: Wise Words: Ancient Egypt’s Wisdom Tradition • *Wegner*

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS

1 | 2 4/9/26: George Gershwin: Music and Healing • *Kogan* • **\$40**

1 | 2 4/30/26: Unveiling Niccolò Betti’s Madonna & Child (& SJB) • **FREE**

WINE EDUCATION • Single Fee Non-Member: **\$60** • Couple Fee Non-Member: **\$110**

1 | 2 5/29/26: Loire Valley • 5:30 pm • *Falchek* • *Four wines, lecture & discussion, and Hors d’Oeuvres included*

membership **options**

SPRING SEMESTER MEMBERSHIP • 1/1/2026 – 6/30/2026

All Spring Semester Programs (4 luncheons, 2 classes, 2 collaborative programs, and Wine Education Event)

☐ Individual **\$375** ☐ Couple **\$700**

SPRING SEMESTER ANGEL MEMBERSHIP • 1/1/2026 – 6/30/2026

Membership benefits, plus book sales are half off, plus an invitation to the Schemel Advisory Board

☐ Individual **\$500** ☐ Couple **\$625**

SPRING SEMESTER ARCHANGEL MEMBERSHIP • 1/1/2026 – 6/30/2026

Membership benefits, plus book sales are gratis, plus an invitation to the Schemel Advisory Board

☐ Individual **\$750** ☐ Couple **\$1,000**

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